

Application No.: 10/776,619  
Amendment dated: October 20, 2006  
Reply to Office Action dated: July 27, 2006

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**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

1-6 (Cancelled)

7. (Previously Presented) A method of computer aided detection of product defects, comprising:

responsive to performance data of a product or a product line, comparing with a computer the performance data to performance benchmarks,

when the comparison identifies an instance of product performance that fails a benchmark, determining whether the instance relates to a product defect previously undetected in the product line,

if so, generating an alert regarding the previously undetected product defect.

8. (Original) The method of claim 7, further comprising, if the instance relates to a previously detected product defect, determining whether the instance indicates that the defect is occurring within the product at a rate that exceeds statistical limits established for the defect and, if so, generating an alert.

9. (Original) The method of claim 7, further comprising performing diffusion modeling for the product to determine an extent to which defective products have proliferated in a distribution chain for the product.

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10-16 (Cancelled)

17. (Previously Presented) Computer readable medium having instructions stored thereon that, when executed by a processing device, causes the device to:

responsive to performance data of a product of a product line, compare the performance data to performance benchmarks,

when the comparison identifies an instance of product performance that fails a benchmark, determine whether the instance relates to a product defect previously undetected in the product line, and

if so, generate an alert regarding the previously undetected product defect.

18. (Original) The medium of claim 17, wherein, if the instance relates to a previously detected product defect, the instructions further cause the device to determine whether the instance indicates that the defect is occurring within the product at a rate that exceeds statistical limits established for the defect and, if so, generating an alert.

19. (Original) The medium of claim 17, wherein the instructions further cause the device to perform diffusion modeling for the product to determine an extent to which defective products have proliferated in a distribution chain for the product.

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20. (New) The method of claim 7, wherein the performance data is collected from a source internal or external to a company manufacturing the product or the product line.
21. (New) The method of claim 20, wherein the external source is selected from the group consisting of a customer, a supplier, a distributor, a government agency, and an external testing service.
22. (New) The method of claim 20, wherein the internal source is selected from the group consisting of an internal testing system, a quality control system, and a quality management system.
23. (New) The medium of claim 17, wherein the performance data is collected from a source internal or external to a company manufacturing the product or the product line.
24. (New) The medium of claim 23, wherein the external source is selected from the group consisting of a customer, a supplier, a distributor, a government agency, and an external testing service.
25. (New) The medium of claim 23, wherein the internal source is selected from the group consisting of an internal testing system, a quality control system, and a quality management system.

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26. (New) A method of computer-aided detection of product defects, comprising:

at an enterprise computer system, responsive to receipt of performance data relating to a product manufactured by an operator of the enterprise computer system, comparing the received performance data to previously-stored performance data relating to other products of a same product line;

when the comparing indicates that the received performance data fails a performance benchmark for the product, determining whether the performance data relates to a previously-stored product defect of the product line;

if the performance data relates to the previously-stored product defect, performing product diffusion modeling to determine an extent of propagation of the previously-stored product defect through a product distribution chain; and

generating an alert if the frequency of the previously-stored product defect exceeds a predetermined limit.

27. (New) The method of claim 26, wherein the performance data is received from a source internal or external to the operator of the enterprise computer system.

28. (New) The method of claim 27, wherein the internal source is selected from the group consisting of an internal testing system, a quality control system, and a quality management system.

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29. (New) The method of claim 27, wherein the external source is selected from the group consisting of a customer, a supplier, a distributor, a government agency, and an external testing service.

30. (New) A computer-readable medium having instructions stored thereon that, when executed by a processing device, causes the device to:

at an enterprise computer system, responsive to receipt of performance data relating to a product manufactured by an operator of the enterprise computer system, comparing the received performance data to previously-stored performance data relating to other products of a same product line;

when the comparing indicates that the received performance data fails a performance benchmark for the product, determining whether the performance data relates to a previously-stored product defect of the product line;

if the performance data relates to the previously-stored product defect, performing product diffusion modeling to determine an extent of propagation of the previously-stored product defect through a product distribution chain; and

generate an alert if the frequency of the previously-stored product defect exceeds a predetermined limit.

31. (New) The medium of claim 30, wherein the performance data is received from a source internal or external to the operator of the enterprise computer system.

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32. (New) The medium of claim 31, wherein the internal source is selected from the group consisting of an internal testing system, a quality control system, and a quality management system.

33. (New) The medium of claim 31, wherein the external source is selected from the group consisting of a customer, a supplier, a distributor, a government agency, and an external testing service.